

Series: 1999-2000
Circular Letter C-9

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi
Commissioner of Education

DATE: January 3, 2000

SUBJECT: Connecticut Mastery Test Results

As you are aware, the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) student results will be delivered to school districts during the week of January 3, 2000. The statewide results will be released at the February 2, 2000, State Board of Education (SBE) meeting.

In meeting with groups of superintendents during the last few weeks, there was discussion about how districts can use CMT results during the time between the release of district reports in early January and the statewide release in early February. We strongly encourage you to use this time prior to statewide reporting to verify the accuracy of the test reports and evaluate your district and school data. For example, all schools and students tested should have scores, each student tested should have a Parent Student Diagnostic Report, etc. If some information appears missing or inaccurate (e.g., a student is scored as void when in fact he/she took the test), districts should immediately contact our CMT contractor Harcourt Educational Measurement at 1-800-228-0752 (x5837), so that appropriate action can be taken. In addition, districts should conduct an internal analysis of the data reports so that district personnel are better able to explain results to parents, are prepared for questions from the press and can begin examining curriculum and school improvement plans in light of the test results. Rather than comparing scores across districts, it would be most productive to concentrate on analyzing data for each school and districtwide, and focusing on the growth over time from 1993-1999. Keep in mind that the package you receive in January includes a student data diskette(s) which can be used with the Mastery Test Information System/Connecticut Academic Performance Test (MTIS/CAPT) software to help you analyze your district data in various ways. For example, this package allows you to disaggregate data by any of several demographic variables in order to better understand results.

Superintendents of Schools

Page two

January 3, 2000

As with any standardized assessment, we should not focus on small fluctuations in performance from year to year but rather look at performance over longer periods of time. Please note that the Connecticut State Department of Education believes it is **inappropriate** to rank order schools and school districts. Rank ordering over-emphasizes very insignificant differences, and distorts a district's actual student achievement (measured against specific learning criteria). Furthermore, such a ranking contradicts the purposes of the CMT, which include a process for continuous improvement and for focusing on our greatest needs.

As a state, we've set high goals, and our schools have responded with actions that have helped students meet those goals. The philosophy of continuous improvement requires all of us to use these latest results to focus on our greatest needs.

If you have questions about the CMT or if you don't receive your results by January 7th, please call Dr. Douglas A. Rindone, Chief, Bureau of Student Assessment and Research (860-566-1684) or Dr. Peter Behuniak, Director of Student Assessment and Testing, at 860-566-2201.

Thank you.

TSS:hrk